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## Still Dancing

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# Still Dancing

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*Mary Dengler*

I slowly waking see my plant in static dance.  
Its arms reach upward outward toward the sun  
or downward in a graceful sweep  
of slender pointed leaves  
named “mother-in-law tongues” by those  
who, having met the sharpened points of wives’ or husbands’ mothers’ wit,  
recoil  
and think they should reside in hothouse soil  
restrained,  
since they, with deeply sunken roots,  
have gained a foothold and  
tenaciously live on  
untended and neglected  
but a force among the younger shoots.

By roots restrained, atop my desk it bathes  
in sunlight, leaning toward the cardinal’s liquid song  
and pulls my vision down along and up its strong  
and bent or standing leaves  
in rapid ride behind my waking eyes.

Imbibing sun and moisture for its food,  
it synthesizes these with carbon-dioyed air  
to make the carbohydrates of its fair  
and lighter-green-framed slender leaves  
and fill my room with oxygen it breaths,  
its work in silent tandem  
with the thoughtless efforts of my blood and lungs,  
the two of us in harmony,  
with nothing spare.

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Its mindless work—  
producing leaves and air  
that move toward ceiling, window, walls and floor,  
although it stays in one small soil-filled pot for years—  
upbraids the changing lodgings of my thoughtful  
and less graceful  
but still rooted toil.

Upon its stage of one large book,  
whose print awaits the reader's mind  
to dance, though frozen still  
on leaves of paper bound  
between their hardened sheaths,  
the plant awaits the human eye  
to dance its rhythmic form.

This static dance evokes aesthetic yearning  
for transcendent realms in one  
like Keats, who having wandered through an ode  
embroidered on a Grecian Urn,  
transferred its fleeing maidens, gods, and pining youths  
still warm and frozen  
to his page.

And as the figures of his ode  
remain from age to age  
to “tease us out of thought as doth eternity,”  
the static dancing  
of these pointed green-flamed tongues  
remains to chide us into thought  
for all eternity.